# LEONORA AINSLIE.

## A TALE OF CITY LIFE.

BY ELLA HOWARD.

### CHAPTER I.

"Is that you, husband?" asked Leonora Ainslie, in a languid tone of voice, to a gentleman who directed his steps to the parlor.

"It is I, my dear wife; are you particularly desirous of seeing me? You seem not well." He missed her usually light step and cheerful bound into his arms on this evening. "Are you ill?" demanded he affectionately, as he smoothed the rich brown wave of hair that parted over his wife's truly classic forehead.

"No, Charles, I am not ill," replied she, as they rested upon the sofa, "that is, I am not well;" but, recovering from a degree of languor to resume her explanation, as she saw he smiled at her reply, she resumed, "I am neither well nor ill, if I can make you understand the seeming contradiction."

"Neither well nor ill?" repeated he. "It will take an evening's chat to convince me of one or both of these assertions. Let us take a cup of tea upon it, then I 'll light a cigar, for I can always see more clearly through a subject when it is enveloped in a cloud of smoke. While you give orders, I will just step into my slippers. Such a nice time as we will have!" emphasized he, and would probably have said much more had not the servant entered and announced that tea was ready.

Charles Ainslie affected a sudden start of joy at these tidings only for the sake of eliciting a responsive feeling on the part of his wife. At any time he would have given up the best cup of Souchong to chase the shadow of a care from her brow.

But if Mr. Ainslie thought to effect his object by magic starts, he missed it on this evening. Mrs. Ainslie, whatever was the matter with her, was too far gone for that. She resumed her reclining position, only, instead of his shoulder, took the hair-cloth pillow of the sofa to lean upon; the hard hair-cloth on which to rest her beautiful cheek that was the mate of a peach for color and freshness.

"Indeed, Charles, I am too wretched to move. You may take your tea without me; I can stay alone until you get through. Really, it seems to me there is nothing but cooking going on in this house from morning until night. Breakfast at nine, dinner at three, tea at seven, and mutton-chops, as I live, again for supper. Shut the door, Sally; I will not go to tea nor subject myself any longer to feeling at one time like a sheep, another like a calf, until I fear to lose my identity. I am disgusted with meat suppers." So saying, Mrs. Ainslie shut her eyes, and would her ears if she could to farther argument.

Mr. Ainslie saw through the whole state of the case in a moment; and, with the kindest expressions of sympathy, humored his wife in this new whim; but, being hungry, he suggested to her that, as she was really too ill to go as far as the dining-room, they should have the tea brought into the parlor. Mrs. Ainslie nodded a speechless consent; a word would have been too much of an effort. Sally was called, a few orders conveyed to her in an under tone, when Mrs. Ainslie put out her little taper finger, and touched her husband's arm.

"Charles, for my sake, not the chops!" Sally had gone but a few steps when she was recalled by Mr. Ainslie, with the order, "and Sally, not the chops!" Sally obeyed, returning in a few moments with a tray, on which she had placed two cups of fragrant tea, sandwiches, and other tempting viands that would have pleased the most fastidious appetite. Mr. Ainslie was quite at home in his new office of arranging the tea-poy for his wife, and another for himself just beside it, while Sally stood by holding the tray—amused at the one, and making her own silent comments upon the conduct of the other. Very soon all was arranged to Mr. Ainslie's satisfaction, and Sally dismissed. Before closing the door, she turned to give a glance at the inanimate form on the sofa, exclaiming, in *sotto voce*, "Lord! but the airs of that one!" Now, Sally was the cream of Irish girls, withal the only domestic in the house; when there was extra work, others were employed to assist; but the principal duties devolved upon her. She would have liked to have her mistress a little oftener in the kitchen to assist her, perhaps in the dressing of a salad, the concocting of a dessert, or in the thousand little offices that a lady in moderate circumstances is called upon to do, at any rate supervise. She went on cheerfully, however, in the hope that her mistress would see that she must lend her aid or get a cook to relieve her. At all events, Sally reasoned she could leave the place. That alternative she would prefer avoiding, for, in truth, she loved it. Mrs. Ainslie was the soul of good-will and generosity. Already had Sally's bandbox been stocked with French worked collars, gay ribbons, and a nice hat as good as new, given that day to her, that had been worn only two months, besides other perquisites, causing Sally to feel that "the lines had fallen to her in too pleasant places" to displace them rudely by even an interposing hand. The house had been newly furnished, as yet little or nothing to do compared to what the short days in winter had in store for them both. Mrs. Ainslie was only a bride of a few months, to be sure; Sally charitably reasoned,

brides must always be dressed up—the hall-bell was forever going—the house filled with callers. Sally thought a trifle too many stayed for lunch, but that was not her business. There was a well-stocked pantry, everything dealt out with an unsparing hand; all she objected to was the extra work it caused her. Then Mrs. Ainslie expected her to be the perfection of neatness, to open the door for her visitors. How could she, on perhaps a wash or scrubbing day, wear her best clothes? Five dollars a month would not afford it; still she liked the place; the well-dressed people that came to it; her mistress's sixteen silk dresses, not omitting a black velvet pelisse, as she called it, that she took delight in counting over. When alone in the house, her greatest amusement consisted in just throwing them over her shoulders to see how they would become her, never dreaming that the question could be mooted of her becoming them. At any time she would refrain from her own wild song to listen to the bravura emanating from the parlor. Her mistress's voice, and performance on the piano, were the pride of the street they lived in; to be sure the girl next door, with a Milesian emphasis on the noun sounding as though spelled *gurrel*, kept at the piano from morning till night. Sally observed to a friend, "but she might tingle till death, and she'd niver perduce the likes." In short, Sally was a devoted admirer of the nice house and her gay young mistress.

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## CHAPTER II.

Mr. Ainslie must have been very hungry, for the eatables disappeared most mysteriously; now and then his wife would open her eyes languidly and observe something else missing. He at last volunteered to finish the untouched sandwich upon his wife's plate; *that* no sooner gone than he amiably proffered to drink the tea she had but just dawdled the spoon in. Rather impatiently pushing the cup towards him, just spilling a little over into the saucer, she suggested to him the propriety of swallowing cup and all. Mrs. Ainslie turned her back to her husband without a seeming effort. Mr. Ainslie almost choked with laughter, as he drained the dregs from the saucer, even striking it two or three times on the edge of the cup to get the last drop.

"That's a good cup of tea—most excellent," observed Mr. Ainslie aloud; though to all appearance his wife slept, he suspected she was foxing a little. "Those chops would have relished particularly, as I have not; but, never mind, I see chops are fallen, stocks and chops! One and the same, both, go down at a time; the way of the world! wicked world! be burnt up some time or other." Mr. Ainslie lighted his cigar, and mused as he smoked, while his wife preserved unbroken silence, or feigned sleep. He had lighted his cigar at the gas light, and marveled what turn affairs would take next, for she was the loved subject of all his reveries.

The cigar must have been a stronger one than usual, for the fumes brought a violent fit of coughing on his wife. Strange! smoking had never done so before; but he laid it aside, presuming the difficulty arose from the indefinite state of health his wife had been thrown in since breakfast time; to use her own words, "Neither ill nor well." He had thought, as he gazed on her faultless proportions, her perfection of bloom and beauty, that he knew of a panacea to avert the continuance of the new evil; but the doses must be homœopathic, and given in infinitesimals. He had chosen her, for he loved her; she had hitherto been the idol of a large circle of friends; her sphere of usefulness was not so wide as he hoped it would become, from the manner in which her time had been formerly spent; as yet, the attractive superseded the domestic. Trusting to the standard of perfection she attained in the lighter branches of art, he did not despair of seeing her turn to the duties of her new state, therein to walk in perfection.

Charles Ainslie was a rising young man, of fine person, fine mind, sound judgment, and honest principles; he laid his views open to his wife before marriage, and believed implicitly the words she had then spoken, that she loved him too dearly to delay their union for events that, by including the delay, would bring competency. She rather, and indeed sincerely, wished to begin housekeeping with one servant, to having two, that she might know better the respective duties of each when she would require them. So she said; as yet the novelty of marriage and the congratulations of friends had occupied her; but now that there was a slight cessation of these occupations, he saw through his mind's eye that the curse of nothing to do had come upon her. Therefore he was prepared for anything, and not surprised when, upon reaching the sofa, his wife threw her arms around his neck, weeping violently.

"Why, Leonora, wife, tell me what is the matter? what has happened, since morning, to cause you so much distress? Come now, dry your eyes, cheer up, and just let us talk over this little affair rationally."

"Oh, Charles! do not call this a little affair. I am wretched, and have been wretched this week past and more. I should not have got married. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Why, darling wife! it can be no little affair that causes you to say such words, such as those, 'You should not have married!' Have you seen any one you could love better than your husband?"

"Oh, no, no, no! not that," interrupted his wife, clinging closer to his neck, "not that; only I am not fit to be any one's wife. I do not know how to be a housekeeper. Here it is evening, and the rooms up stairs are all in disorder."

"Why, what has Sally been doing?"

"Cooking, cooking all day. Breakfast was no sooner over than she had to go to market; then visitors came; I had to attend the door myself. I did not care for that though, for they were only Carrie and Kate; we practiced duets together until dinner-time, then I set the table myself, and waited a whole

hour for you to come to dinner. Sally got out of patience, and talked ever so much Irish to herself; I know it was all about leaving here. If she leaves, I do not know what will become of me, Charles." Here another burst of tears. "Then I watched and waited for you; you never came until supper-time. I have not eaten a thing since lunch, and have not seen you a day this week from morning until night. Oh dear! I can never live so; life is a purgatory, as Sally truly says, upon such terms. I know I feel incapable of doing any more than I do; still everything is in disorder."

Here Mr. Ainslie interposed a remark as prelude to the cure. "Leonora, you know that it was your own choice, when you became a wife, to keep but one servant; indeed, your impulse would have led you to dispense with that one, if necessity had not prevented. Never mind that though; then you exerted yourself more than I wished you, in arranging your rooms, from your too eager desire of having everything done in a moment. A little patience, and all would have been as well, if not better."

"There! even what I did do," interrupted Mrs. Ainslie, "meets no praise from you, though I nearly killed myself to have a room fixed every day when you came home."

"I do praise you, Leonora; you can do all things perfectly if you give yourself time. You would not wait for an upholsterer, and caused yourself useless fatigue, besides risk of life, in hanging pictures and curtains; not to speak of the danger my own neck was in when the whole family of St. Joseph came tumbling down upon my devoted head, two days after you hung up the picture. Faith! it 's well they came in canvass, or it would have been a matter of serious moment to me, just starting out in life with such a family on my shoulders. All jokes aside; you have chosen to take the domestic arrangements into your own hands; endeavor to accomplish your original intention; you will meet with no opposition from me, but every assistance or counsel in my power that I can give you. To produce harmony in any condition of things requires system. By your own account you have done nothing this day but breakfast, answer the bell once, practice duets, dress for dinner, and wait for me; no wonder you are wretched, and life is a purgatory. It would make a warmer place than poets dream, of this beautiful earth to me, if I had so little to do."

"System!" petulantly argued Mrs. Ainslie, with some spirit, "all metaphysics. Charles, you are only systematic from habit. You have certain hours of the day to appear on 'Change. All men are alike; you could not alter your mind any more than the sun his course, if a genius arose to instruct you in a different path. You must walk Wall Street, with the crowd going down, whether you have business or not; return with the mass coming up, look more knowingly than you *know how* to talk of who a bull to-day will be a bear to-morrow. You would find yours was an explosive system if you held command over the affairs of this house for a week."

"This house! Why, Leonora, what will become of you when you occupy the mansion you have planned yourself, if you do not try, by degrees, to resort to some method of management?"

"I'll give up the mansion cheerfully."

"No, that you cannot do, for this week I have been detained by examining estimates, and to-day have contracted for the work; so neither deprive yourself of food nor ease of mind, at the casual detentions of a man of business; and listen to me for only a few moments longer, while I just show you how much you might accomplish by a more judicious disposal of your time."

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## CHAPTER III.

It may be as well to detail a few of the arguments Mr. Ainslie made use of to bring his wife over to his opinions. She listened, as wives should always (though seldom do), to all her husband said; making silent comments upon the impracticability of some of his suggestions. Once sensible of the real necessity of putting her hand to, at the present time to aid Sally, whose services were really invaluable, she, at a glance, foresaw how much annoyance she could spare herself. She was willing, but, as yet, did not know how. She had always arranged and dusted her parlor, except on regular cleaning days; beyond that, her aspirations had never ascended. Her readiness to appropriate her time, as her husband proposed, warred with nothing so much as his desire of reducing her number of friends. To convince her that her new duties required so slight a sacrifice, Mr. Ainslie gave her paper and pencil to write down the names of those she called her "dear friends." Name followed name in rapid succession until the list swelled to the number of one hundred. Incredible almost to herself, she could have continued adding, had he not expressed his satisfaction that the list was sufficiently lengthy for his required purpose. Marking off such as he desired her to cease visiting; then, specifying others for intimate friends on account of similarity of tastes; adding an aged friend's name or so to the list, that she had forgotten, he placed his own only at the bottom of it, under the term "Confidential." His wife looked on with amazement, and exclaimed—

"Why, Charles! how can I hurt the feelings of these old friends? They have known me all my life, and will call me proud and unfeeling. Indeed, I could not bear to hear such terms applied to me."

"They have known you all your life? That is no reason to urge against what I propose," replied he, now looking seriously. "Pray what advantage have they been to you? Is there one among them that is distinguished for any superior virtue? Have you ever learned anything useful from them? Have you not sung yourself hoarse, played cotillions for their coteries, to my knowledge without even a 'thank you' from them? They flatter you, and kiss

their dear friend, as they call you, a dozen times a day—in the street—over the gutters—it matters not when or where. As long as you change your dress for every party, look stylish, introduce them to the society of your valued friends, who would not afterwards notice them, to further their own private views, they will court you. But, wait and mark my words, if one of those, whose names I have erased, comes to this little domicile after the first visit of curiosity is paid. Now, that you cannot give large parties for them, you will be amused to hear the excuses they will give when they meet you by accident. Give yourself no concern about hurting their feelings; instead of you dropping them, they will drop you. Rejoice with me that you have, through disinterested love, placed yourself in a position to judge who are your real friends. In the mean time, keep your own secret about our future plans or intended removal. This winter will open your eyes to a new glimpse of life as it is. I would that *Mrs. Ainslie's* society should be more eagerly sought than easily obtained.

Mrs. Ainslie was sensible that all her husband advanced was true. Through the retrospective view he sketched of those evenings, she saw that, though an invited guest, she performed the office of musician for the company. She did not feel mortified, for, through her unselfishness, she had won the heart of her loved husband. For him, and a few other shining lights, "the coteries" had been organized, their ostensible object, amusement; their paramount, good settlement in life. Mr. Ainslie, in giving the dose, had worked a cure; he had given his wife a secret to keep. Their new house! she would not breathe a word of it, it was to be in a secluded part of the city; no one would find it out until they would call at this to-be-vacated abode, and find them removed to some number or other, Washington Square.

It was an ordeal to which she was not displeased to subject her friends. How Carrie would enjoy it! she thought; and Kate (though Charles had insinuated to the contrary), she was sure, was true as steel. *Nous verrons.*

The next morning, for the first time since her marriage, Mrs. Ainslie finished her toilet before her husband had descended to the kitchen. It was rather colder than she liked, as the night air had penetrated into the entries, making door handles cold to the touch; but, wrapping her quilted morning-dress more closely around her, she made her *entrée* into the kitchen, to the great wonderment of Sally, and the immediate construction of three crosses on the forehead, nose, and mouth of that most worthy woman. In hasty tones, Sally demanded if "the master was ill, or herself either?"

"All well enough, Sally," Mrs. Ainslie replied; "but I am coming down every morning to see that Mr. Ainslie's breakfast goes properly to the table."

"That you may be as good as your word," ejaculated Sally.

"Well, Sally! it is not proper for you to make any remarks, for you do cook and do your work well; but it is the duty of every mistress, you know, to be occasionally seen in her own kitchen."

"The oftener the more welcome surely," responded Sally; and, as Mrs. Ainslie carried the nice hot beefsteak, brown and broiled, up to the dining-room in one hand, and raised her dress with the other to the exhibiting of a tiny foot, beautifully *chaussée*, Sally paused on the step to remark to her invisible friend in the dresser, in pure mother tongue, "Another notion."

That breakfast was avowed decidedly the best ever eaten by Mr. Ainslie, in his own proper person, a confession, probably, elicited from the fact of meat being a stranger to his palate since the morning previous. The love he made to his wife by looks was carefully illustrated by untiring devotion to the beefsteak. Mrs. Ainslie praised his appetite, as indeed it was a subject of her remarks. Mr. Ainslie praised her beauty of a breakfast cap until Sally confidentially vowed, to her before-mentioned friend, "that it was as good as a play to listen till them."

Mr. Ainslie's departure was the signal for Sally's performance on the bones. On this memorable occasion, there was indeed little else left; not that Sally was anything of a minstrel or "bona fide" musician, for, upon the occasion of Max Larer's benefit, she observed to her invisible friend that "niver did she see such sights, and hear such sounds before nor since she landed in America, and that was four years next Candlemas."

The hall door closed; Mrs. Ainslie's light foot was heard on the stairs. Before proceeding to her own room, she gave the necessary orders to Sally, who was more puzzled at the evident change for the better, in her mistress, than at the dissection she had abandoned knife and fork for, resorting to the "council of Ten," her fingers so named, that, as she observed, "never deserted herself, nor mother church, in a pinch."

Whatever she thought, she made no remarks upon the happy occasion until she reached the kitchen, when she gave full vent to her feelings, rejoicing at the dawn of an entire new condition of things. Like a second Micawber, Mrs. Ainslie was secured now from the dread of ever being deserted by Sally.

From this period, Mrs. Ainslie began to think. Ever anxious to act from principle, she endeavored to correct, or rather govern, her impulses. Through her wish to oblige, they occasionally blinded her judgment and caused her regrets. After a few months of watchfulness, she accustomed herself to reason upon matters of importance, and found the path of easy ascent that she at first thought difficult to climb.

She had made the mistake that many, even all, do upon entering into married life, who think that cares are nothing; to be sure hope, that "never-failing friend of man," and woman too, gilds the picture. Experience soon teaches us that the real must give place to the seeming. Did her spirit ever sink under her new cares? Her husband's kind word and approving smile gave her renewed strength. Was she

weary? His heart she rested on. Was her new path a toil? No! but every step, like in the ladder of the vision, added a virtue that sped her onward, onward.

## CHAPTER IV.

"FIFTEEN years brings changes in the life of every one," mused Sally; "them that was on the top spoke of the wheel are down now, and the down are up." Soliloquizing Sally had given up her old habits, and now resorted to figures in rhetoric. From the progress of the age, expansion of intellect, and other collateral causes, she had given up, or forgotten, her friend in the dresser. Without consciousness of the injury she was doing, Sally had fallen into disgrace through her attachment to her; upon several occasions, Mrs. Ainslie, inferring, from the constant reference of her domestic affairs to the dresser, that Sally was indulging in insolent remarks, prohibited the use of the Irish language in the kitchen, on pain of dismissal.

The above allusion to the mutability of human affairs was owing, no doubt, to Sally's retrospective of her past life. Sally now rode in a carriage; probably, for want of better occupation, was watching every turn of the highly-polished wheels, while taking a ride on the Bloomingdale road with Mrs. Ainslie and the children. Her mistress and she were both thoughtful during this evening. On that day, Sally had accompanied her on a visit to a sick, and apparently dying, woman. The house was in a questionable neighborhood for a lady to be seen alone in; so together they sought the abode designated. They had to travel up long flights of stairs, traverse long deep passages, until Sally felt herself called upon to exercise the protection of a whole host of saints, to "be between them and all harm." Finally, reaching the sixth landing, the door of the apartment marked 40, localities defined by numerals, Mrs. Ainslie entered upon a scene that never entirely left her remembrance.

Why pause to describe the picture? Yet it were as well. The first objects that met her view, upon entering into the room, were two aged persons, male and female, and three children, seated at a table, whose surface matched the hue of the discolored portion constituting their meal. Matted locks, glassy eyes, pallid and sunken cheeks, revealed of physical suffering more than language can express. Yet there were sounds of merriment belying their looks. A loud peal of laughter was checked at Mrs. Ainslie's entrance, created by a little sick child who refused to eat a dried potato that it held in its hand. An older brother of the little moving mass of filth, imitated its whining tones, repeating, "I can't eat it, I want mammy." "Give it to Doggey, then," said the toothless dame, as she shoved a large Newfoundland at her feet. The animal's immovability caused her to look down. The dog lay dead. Sick, almost to fainting, as a glance revealed such unlooked-for wretchedness, Mrs. Ainslie shrunk back. These were not the persons she came to see. A moment, and the door would have closed upon the scene, had not the spectre of a tall pale girl arrested her flight, who, pointing to a corner, said, "There is mother."

Mrs. Ainslie mechanically obeyed the direction indicated, nearly tottering to the side of a narrow bed, whereon lay the emaciated form of a woman in the last stage of consumption.

"Father of mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Ainslie, "can this be my old friend Carrie?"

"All that remains of her, Leonora, if you will allow me so to call you. If I had always taken your good advice, I would be less fearful of offending you by that title. Do not weep; you must hear how much I owe you; your example was my guiding star of life, until pride made me a stranger to you. I could ill-bear bounty from your hands, you whom *he* nearly defrauded. I felt that we would meet again, though little dreamed it would be thus and at this hour. You cannot blame me that I loved him to the last. He would have regained his honorable position among men, had his life been spared; but he has gone to his last account, where I shall soon follow." The invalid wept.

In answer to Mrs. Ainslie's kind inquiries, she resumed. "Look at these," as she held up her almost transparent hands; "they have supported me for years. This, your gift, clasping the sacred volume lying open, my only solace. Sickness and poverty have changed my face, but not my heart. I rejoice that 'there is another and a better world;' but weep only to leave that dear child among strangers; yet HE hath promised to be a father to the fatherless; into HIS hands I commend her!"

The girl remained motionless, in an attitude of deep grief, at the foot of the bed. The dim light revealed her features sufficiently to show Mrs. Ainslie a face of distinct beauty, though want and sorrow had stamped the impress of premature age.

"You must both leave this place," she said, as her thoughts reverted to the picture that first met her view.

"Not worth while. I could not survive a removal. They are very kind to me. Those children's mother was a faithful servant of mine. She died a month since of this same disease. The old man is blind. The grandmother does all she can, but not much since the youngest child fell ill. He will soon be better off. The rest are going to the poor house; only promise to be with me at my last hour, dear Leonora; then lay me in a grave beside my Harry."

Mrs. Ainslie could endure no more; but, promising to return the next day, hastened from a scene whereon my pen has, perhaps, dwelt too long.

The next day the dying Caroline Selby was removed to comfortable rooms. Skillful nursing prolonged her life for a short period. But a few weeks passed when Mrs. Ainslie closed the eyes of her early friend, and the daughter wept bitter tears over the graves of parents whose pride had caused their ruin.

## CHAPTER V.

A few years after the foregoing events, Mr. Ainslie retired from business. A fortunate turn in the money-market had placed him far above competence. He was one of the few who bear prosperity well. Always liberal, though early in life no stranger to straightened resources, he maintained a good name, and commanded the respect of his fellow-men. Too sensible to quit all business, and adopt the slavery of leisure, as he termed it, he appeared on 'Change every day, giving his attention to the rise and decline of stocks—his hobby—thereby aiding, by his foresight, his brother-in-law, Ralph Carroll, who had succeeded him in business. His family was now large: three sons, two blooming daughters, besides Mrs. Ainslie's father and brother, and his adopted daughter, Caroline Selby. Mrs. Ainslie had matured into all that is lovely in woman, practicing the virtues that adorn the respective characters of child, sister, wife, friend, and mother.

In their long life they had met with trials that would, but for the sweet corrective of mutual confidence, have caused disastrous results. Through all, their confidence in each other's faith and love had remained firm, bearing them hoping, trusting, lovingly on. If the old sofa, that witnessed the young wife's first and final display of petulance, could have spoken, it would have told of as gentle words and as loving endearments as it witnessed twenty years before. Silent and contented, it bore the burthen of those secret joys until death. It was beginning to get objectionable usage from its old friend, Sally, who, from admiring it above all things, had taken a violent aversion to it, actually averring that it was not fit to hold a place in her mistress' room. When Mrs. Ainslie pleaded old associations for her attachment to it, Sally argued that there was little need of getting a new one in her, the housekeeper's, room, when that was good enough. Mrs. Ainslie only smiled at these remarks. Sally ruled the house, sometimes the children, but never her.

Opposite to the "rich broker's" house—for so was the Ainslie mansion called—was one of more modern date. A park, shaded by time-grown trees and watered by a summer-flowing fountain, alone intervened to hide them from each other's view, except during the winter season. The inmates led a gay life apparently, as once a fortnight, at least, during the fashionable season, the quiet of the neighborhood was interrupted by the sound of carriages wheeling the busy seekers of the world's gay pleasures to and fro. Of a particularly quiet night, the sound of music, the signal of the dance, reached the ears of the Ainslies as their hour came for retiring. It was a subject of remark to the gossips, that the gay Mrs. Ellsworth and Mrs. Ainslie never recognized each other when they met in society, as it was a well-known and often-repeated fact that, when the former was Kate Marley, Mrs. Ainslie and she were very intimate friends. For whatever reason, concluded they, it was very evident that it was Mrs. Ainslie's own fault if she was not seen at the Ellsworth *soirées*, as it seemed to many Mrs. Ellsworth gave them purposely to pique Mrs. Ainslie into noticing her.

All of which was perfectly true. Mrs. Ellsworth writhed under the mortification of several defeated attempts she had made to resume her former intimacy. She yet hoped that time would effect her wishes through a yet surer medium than had yet been tried. Their children both attended Ferrero's dancing-school, passing friends, but for the malice and envy of the young Ellsworths towards those of the scholars who excelled them in dancing or dressing better than themselves. From some news that reached Mrs. Ellsworth through the young people, she thought one trial more and her object was obtained. She resolved to make a personal application. No one's favor was anything to her so long as, in the face of society, Mrs. Ainslie continued to pass her coldly by.

Arraying herself in the plainest of her morning dresses, effacing all appearance of rouge from her face, assuming a look of humility that, in heart, she was far from feeling, she quietly left her house, hastily traversed the park, and ascended the door-steps of Ainslie mansion. The bell was answered by Sally, who seemed to be less occupied in doing than in giving directions to others. There were preparations for a grand party evidently going on. The Rubicon once passed, Mrs. Ellsworth cast a hasty glance into the suite of drawing-rooms, their sliding doors thrown back, their walls festooned with natural flowers, the thousand burners only wanting light to gild the whole with enchantment. The only room wherein to receive a visitor was Mr. Ainslie's study-library, or smoking-room. This combined all three.

Unrecognized by Sally, Mrs. Ellsworth sent no card or other message than a lady desired to see her mistress. A few moments followed, only serving to still the beatings of her heart, and increase her desire to be even the recognized acquaintance of the only person who had resisted the attractions of her wealth, when Mrs. Ainslie stood before her.

It were needless to detail the arguments the practical woman of the world used to effect her object. Sufficient for the purpose will be Mrs. Ainslie's reply, showing *why* she refused the vain appeal.

"For five years after my marriage, Catherine Marley, I acknowledged your influence. I would not listen to a doubt of your sincerity. As soon have dreamed of a sister's deceit as yours. You instigated me to one great folly in my youth, that causes me regret to think of; but it brought evil consequences alone to yourself. From the moment the fortune-teller prophecied a brilliant destiny to you, you became a changed being. To satisfy your ambition, you married, without loving, a man devoid of principle, for the sake of his wealth. Fashion became your idol, shutting your heart against

all softening influences. I still loved and pitied you, knowing that I had innocently won the object of your unsolicited affections, nor did I jealously strive to mar your intercourse, depending upon his love and the fixedness of your principles.

"When I found that, though a married woman, you still thirsted for conquest, I sorrowed for your fall, and tried to cast you from my heart. When, with smooth tongue, you besought me to warn Harry Selby of his danger in time to save him from disgrace, and witnessed his gratitude, you dared the attempt to win my husband's love with a tale of my dishonor; then I spurned you from me, as the remembrance makes me now. Do not doubt. He told me all. But for your intrusion this morning, I deemed this a day of unalloyed happiness. You must be satisfied with this, our last interview. My duties require me elsewhere."

The discomfited votary of fashion left disappointed, not repentant. A few years closed her worldly career. Contemned by the truly virtuous, never knowing "the blessed peace this world cannot give," she went down to her grave the unhappy victim of a misplaced ambition.

## CHAPTER VI.

A long train of carriages passed along the Broadway, leading from Mrs. Ainslie's mansion. There were old and young people. Gay faces; no grave ones. Everybody smiled as the *cortège* swept along. It was apparent to all that it was the occasion of a happy bridal. The crowd could not see the face of the bride. The blinds of her carriage were closed, as were those of the four others that followed "*en train.*" It was five o'clock of an October evening. What a day it had been!—not a cloud! The very sun seemed not willing to set, until his last ray had stolen a kiss from the cheek of the bride. Many followed to the church to see the whole affair. The eight bridesmaids! The beautiful bride led forth by the happy bridegroom. "Who is he?" asked a dozen lookers-on. "Ralph Carroll." "Carroll! Who? Which?" "Don't you know the Carrolls? One of our old families. Ainslie, the broker's brother." "Oh! Ah! Who is the bride?" "Their adopted daughter, Caroline Selby." "Splendid girl, 'pon honor!" ejaculates the dandy, twirling his cane.

But now they walk up the aisle. The wedding guests, in their white gloves and white ribbons, dispose themselves in pews, where they can best see her face. They stand before the chancel. The bride is trembling from varied emotions. Her intended husband speaks a few words of encouragement. The vaulted roof is above her. A perfect stillness reigns around, when a strain of almost celestial harmony steals upon the air. Her eyes pierce the Heaven, painted in glowing light above; she would wish, if mortals could behold, to see the spot from whence her mother's eye watches over her. Again her eyelids fall. The clergyman approaches. Hands unite; then are pronounced the impressive words, what "*He* has joined no man shall put asunder." A pause. Friends crowd around the happy pair. The orphan bride leans on the neck of Mrs. Ainslie. One word, "Mother!" escapes her lips.

Soon the husband begins to show his authority. He snatches her away before half the people have kissed her. But the sun has taken his, and our old friend Sally hers. There she stands in the vestibule, too orthodox to cross the threshold. The love she bears the bride is manifested in the blessings she invokes upon her head, and the kisses on both her cheeks. The carriages move; the crowd disperse. A new moon arises that never sets. 'Tis the honeymoon! Night soon closes over the scene. The sound of music proceeds from the Ainslie mansion. There are gay and gladsome voices mingling together in converse and the dance. Among them stands, as conspicuous for virtue as the bride for loveliness, Mrs. Ainslie, of whom it may be truly said, "the registry of her life formed a transcript of Heaven."

## THE POOR LOVER'S SONG.

BY MAURICE O'QUILL, ESQ.

Mine is not wealth, nor mine estate—
An humble lot I call my own;
And yet I would it were in fate
To make it thine and mine alone!
A lowly roof o'er thee and me,
A scanty board between us spread,
With passion pure as air and free,
Would bid us spurn life, richer led.

Thy sphere, I know, were better laid
In lofty domes of haughty pride,
Where borrowed arts, with splendor, aid
To make life's stream a golden tide.
But, by thy side, this breast of mine,
With truthful pulse, thine own would meet;
Whilst some gay lord might turn from thine,
Or scarce respond its loving beat.

I do not yearn the costly pearls
A princely purse may tempt with gold
From eastern climes, to gem the curls
That sweep thy brows in grace untold,
For thine are charms that chide the hand
Which could insult, with tinseled toys,
Their beauteous crowd, whose matchless band
From art's best deed the glance decoys.

Another hand than mine, I ween,
May yet press thine in wedlock's grasp,
And bright to him and thee the scene
I hope will wake beneath the clasp!
Yet worlds were sweet, and they were glad,
Together, if but thou and I
Could trace the paths which else were sad,
And must make mine the wish to die!